THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHRIRAM CHAUHAN): (a) to (c) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Improvement in PDS

†147. PROF. M.M. AGARWAL : Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to take necessary measures to improve public distribution system; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHRIRAM CHAUHAN): (a) and (b) The Public Distribution System (PDS) evolved as a system of management of scarcity and for distribution of foodgrains at affordable prices. Over the years, it has become an important part of Government's policy for management of food economy in the country. PDS is supplemental in nature and does not make available the entire requirement of any commodities to a household or section of the society. It is operated under the joint responsibility of the Central and State Governments. The Central Government is responsible for procurement, storage and transportation of PDS commodities up to the central godowns and making them available to the State Governments. The responsibility for distribution to the consumers through Fair Price Shops (FPSs) and administration of PDS rests with State Governments/UT Administration. In order to efficiently reach the essential commodities under Public Distribution System to the consumers in a transparent and accountable manner a Model Citizens' Charter for Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) has also been drawn up and circulated to States/UTs for

†Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.

adoption. Based on the belief that truly democratic institutions do better safeguard food security concerns of all than the State bureaucracy, the Government has also advised the State Governments to more substantially involve the Gram Panchayats in supervision and monitoring of PDS especially at FPS level as a measure of social audit.

State Governments have been requested to regularly monitor PDS at the Fair Price Shops (FPSs) and other levels and to make arrangement for distribution of PDS commodities in a transparent and accountable manner. They have also been asked to eliminate bogus ration cards and initiate action against erring FPS owners under Section 3 of Essential Commodities Act, 1995.

The Government of India has set up Public Grievances' Redressal Cell in the Department of Public Distribution to attend to the complaints relating to any aspect of the Department's functioning including the Public Distribution System.

The Government of India has appointed Area Officers to State/UTs to monitor the functioning of Public Distribution System including the complaints of diversion. The observations made by Area Officers are sent to the respective States/UTs for taking appropriate action.

The Antyodaya Anna Yojana has been launched to make the Targeted Public Distribution System more focussed and targeted towards the 5% of the population who do not get even two square meals a day. The scheme contemplates identification of one crore poorest "hungry" families and providing them with 25 kgs. of foodgrains per family per month at Rs. 2/- per kg. of Wheat and Rs. 3/- per kg. of rice.

With a view to better targetise the PDS, Government has now decided to restrict the supply of sugar to BPL families in the country except in the North-Eastern States/Hilly States/Island Territories.